

## Francesco Corbetta - The Best of All

### 21. I-Rama-A-Ms.4912<sup>1</sup>

#### Introduction

**I-Rama-A-Ms.4912** (*Olim I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912*)<sup>2</sup> is an anonymous and undated manuscript of presumably Italian provenance comprising 119 unnumbered folios in oblong format measuring 160 x 225mm. A digital image of the manuscript was<sup>3</sup> available at

[http://bibliomediateca.santacecilia.it/bibliomediateca/cms.view?munu\\_str=0\\_1\\_0\\_4&numDoc=20&physDoc=14398&pflag=personalizationFindBiblioteca](http://bibliomediateca.santacecilia.it/bibliomediateca/cms.view?munu_str=0_1_0_4&numDoc=20&physDoc=14398&pflag=personalizationFindBiblioteca)

The library catalogue entry describes the manuscript as *ncompleto e mutilo* it has clearly been badly affected by damp; there is extensive staining at the top of each page. There is no title page or other preliminary material. The manuscript is ruled throughout with six staves to a page. The pieces are grouped according to mode or key with some unused pages between sections. The on-line digital image does not include the unused pages and the listing of these in the library catalogue entry at the beginning of the original pdf is unhelpful as the manuscript has recently been restored and the pages re-arranged.<sup>4</sup> In its present state there are eleven apparently blank pages at the beginning (folios 1r-6r); an attempt to erase the content of these has been made at some point and the pieces are no longer legible. At the end there are fourteen further folios, (f.106r-119v), some with erased contents and some ruled but unused.

The manuscript is the work of two separate very distinctive copyists, identified here as Hand A and Hand B. Originally, pieces mainly, if not exclusively, by Corbetta and Bartolotti were copied by Hand A. At a later date pieces, some of them attributed to a certain Domenico Rainer, were copied on the unused pages left at the end of each section by Hand B, possibly by Rainer himself.<sup>5</sup> One interesting characteristic of Hand A is the lopsided 8 which is also a feature of the typeface used in Bartolotti's 'Secondo libro di chitarra' (ca.1656). Hand B uses the more usual upright form.

The mode and the corresponding *alfabeto* are indicated at the beginning of each section with small tabs visible on each side of the folio as follows -

p.2 - 15 G minor	[Mode 2 = O]
p.16-29 A minor	Mode 3= D <sup>6</sup>
p.30-39 E minor	Mode 4= +
p.40-57 C major	Mode 5 = B
p.58-66 F major	Mode 6 = G
p.67-76 D major	Mode 7 = C

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<sup>1</sup> I am greatly indebted to Lex Esienhardt for making available to me a pdf of the manuscript which includes the blank pages and for sharing with me the notes he made when examining it personally at the library in Rome.

<sup>2</sup> The manuscript is now in the Bibliomediateca dell'Accademia nazionale di S. Cecilia in Rome. The Accademia and the Conservatorio are now in separate institutions.

<sup>3</sup> Currently the digital image does not seem to be available.

<sup>4</sup> The page numbers used in this study are those matching the online pdf on the assumption that this version is the one which most people will have access to. In this pdf page 1 shows the library catalogue entry; the music is on pages 2-120. See Appendix below for a complete list of the contents.

<sup>5</sup> Nothing is currently known about Rainer. It has been suggested that he was a pupil of Roncalli but this is not supported by any evidence. The Allemanda on p.113-114 is attributed to "Dom<sup>co</sup> Rainer"; elsewhere he is referred to only as Rainer.

<sup>6</sup> The *alfabeto* is on p.18 rather than p.16.

p.77-85 G major	Mode 8 = A
p.86-91 B minor	Tuono Trasportato

The section of pieces in A minor includes one piece in A major; the C major section includes two pieces in C minor. The pieces in G minor are not preceded by an *alfabeto* letter or indication of mode. In the seventeenth-century modal system G minor (O) is the equivalent of Mode 2. Mode 1 is the equivalent of D minor (E). Almost certainly the first eleven pages now blank comprised a section of pieces in D minor. From p. 92 to the end of the reproduction the pieces are in various keys.

The catalogue entry states that there are 34 pieces in the manuscript, but in fact there are approximately 75 separate pieces<sup>7</sup> including two pieces from each of Corbetta's printed books, 'Varii capricci' (1643), 'Varii Scherzi' (1648) and 'La guitarre royale' (1671) and 25 pieces from Bartolotti's 'Secondo libro di chitarra' (ca.1656). There are a further six pieces in Hand A which are not included in the surviving printed books of either of them. However, given that most of the pieces in Hand A are by one or the other of them, it is possible that the unidentified pieces are also by them. On the basis of external evidence, three pieces could be tentatively attributed to Corbetta and three pieces to Bartolotti.

Throughout the music is in Italian tablature combined with *alfabeto*. In the pieces by Corbetta the direction of the strummed chords is indicated by placing the heads of the note values on the highest line of the staff with the stems down for a down (bass to treble) stroke and up for an up (treble to bass) stroke rather than with stroke signs on the lowest line of the staff as is more usual in Italian sources.<sup>8</sup> The only sign for an ornament (apart from slurs) is a t with a dot beside it, similar to that used in Corbetta's 'Varii capricci' (1643).

### Summary of the Contents

Pieces in Hand A	37
Pieces in Hand B	38
Pieces in Hand A traced to printed books	31
Pieces by Hand A not traced to printed books	6
Pieces by Corbetta	6 + 3
Pieces by Bartolotti	25 + 3 <sup>9</sup>

The pieces from Corbetta's printed books are set out in the following table.

<sup>7</sup> Some of those by Rainer are in several sections.

<sup>8</sup> The earliest example of music with the note values placed on the staff in this way to have come to light so far is F-Psg Ms.Rés. 2344 – 'Tablature de guitarre fait par Monsieur Dupille' which is dated 1649. Some of the pieces by Rainer also use this system but many of them use the standard Italian system placing stroke marks on the lowest line of the tablature staff. In the pieces by Bartolotti, the direction of the strummed chords is indicated by placing the heads of the note values on the line of the staff where the strum begins with the stems down for a down (bass to treble) stroke and up for an up (treble to bass) stroke, as in the printed book.

<sup>9</sup> The three pieces which may be by Bartolotti are

p.18-19 Alemanda in A minor

p.20-23 Toccata in A major

p.83 Sarabanda in G major

The Sarabanda is also included in GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 f.9r where it is attributed to "a". The other two pieces are stylistically more likely to be by him than by Corbetta. See <https://monicahall.co.uk/bartolotti> for further discussion.

Table 1				
Corbetta 1643			I-Rama-A-Ms.4912	
Page	Key	Title	Page	Title
p.47	G minor	Alm.del 2° tuono	p.2-3	Alamanda
p.49	G minor	Sar.b	p.4	Sarabanda
Corbetta 1648			I-Rama-A-Ms.4912	
p..48	F major	Alm. <sup>a</sup>	p.58-59	Alemanda
p.50	F major	Sarb. <sup>a</sup>	p.62-63	Sarabanda
Corbetta 1671			I-Rama-A-Ms.4912	
p.22	F major	Prel <sup>de</sup>	p.64	Preludio
p.22-23	F major	Allem <sup>de</sup>	p.65-66	Alemanda

The manuscript version of the Alamanda from ‘Varii Capricci’ (1643) is the same as in the printed one. Bar 7 of the Sarabanda is different from the printed book but otherwise the two versions are the same.

There are more variants in the pieces from ‘Varii scherzi’ (1648). In the manuscript version of the Alemanda *alfabeto* chords are used more frequently and the Sarabanda appears to have been abbreviated. (Alternatively, of course, the printed version may have been expanded). In the printed version the first four bar phrase<sup>10</sup> is repeated and the last four bars are a *reprise* of the preceding four bars. There are a few other significant differences. On the first stave the copyist has started to copy what appears to be the opening bars of a different Sarabanda and crossed it out before starting on the piece proper. Bar 10 of the manuscript version has a standard *alfabeto* Chord H3 without an ornament; in the printed version, one of Corbetta’s characteristic dissonant chords – the same chord notated in tablature but with the fourth course left unfretted – is used so that a descending appoggiatura or trill can be played on the first course. In bar 27 instead of the standard Chord N5 used in the manuscript, the printed version has the written out dissonant form with the fifth course left unfretted. This facilitates the fingering of the descending appoggiatura on the following note on the third course and the note after that played at the eighth fret on the fourth course. This is of some significance as there is no reason why Corbetta should have written these chords out in tablature rather than *alfabeto* unless he intended them to be played differently.<sup>11</sup> In bar 15 there is an example of the double descending appoggiatura which Corbetta was rather fond of; the manuscript has a single appoggiatura. At the cadences in bars 6, 11, 15, 25 and 33 the appoggiatura is followed by a notated turn with the lower auxiliary note in the manuscript which is not indicated in the printed version. Otherwise the ornaments are the same in both sources. The open fourth course on the third beat of bar 12 of the manuscript version may be a copying error.

Each of the two versions works well on its own terms. One can only speculate as to whether the manuscript version is a simplified version of the printed one or whether the printed one is a more elaborate version of an earlier one. ‘Varii scherzi’ (1648) is described on the title page as ‘Libro Quarto’ and almost certainly Corbetta had published a book between 1643 and 1648 now missing. The same Sarabanda is found on f.39v of the Gallot manuscript - GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch.C94 - in a version which

<sup>10</sup> A bar line is missing between the second and third bars in the printed version.

<sup>11</sup> It has been claimed that these and other similar altered *alfabeto* chords which occur more frequently in Corbetta’s later books are written out like this to indicate that they should be played with a *barré* and that the dissonant notes should be omitted. See Section IV Part 8 for a discussion of Corbetta’s dissonance.

resembles that included here more closely than the printed version. This does not include the repeated sections and has the standard *alfabeto* chords (in French tablature) at bars 10 and 27. It is conceivable that Corbetta re-cycled his work, re-working it to reflect changes in his style over time.

**Sarabanda – 1648 p.50/21. I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.62-3**



1648

I-Rama

G

5

10

G H3

15

19

B B

24

I C

29

N5

34

M3 H3

The pieces from 'La guitarre royale' (1671) are in Italian tablature with *alfabeto* rather than in French tablature as in the printed book. Otherwise they are to all intents and purposes identical. Their inclusion in the manuscript suggests that the manuscript was copied after 1671. It also indicates that Corbetta's later music was known and did circulate in Italy.

The following pieces may also be by Corbetta.

**F major**

p.60-61

Corrente

**Tuono Trasportato = B minor**

p.86

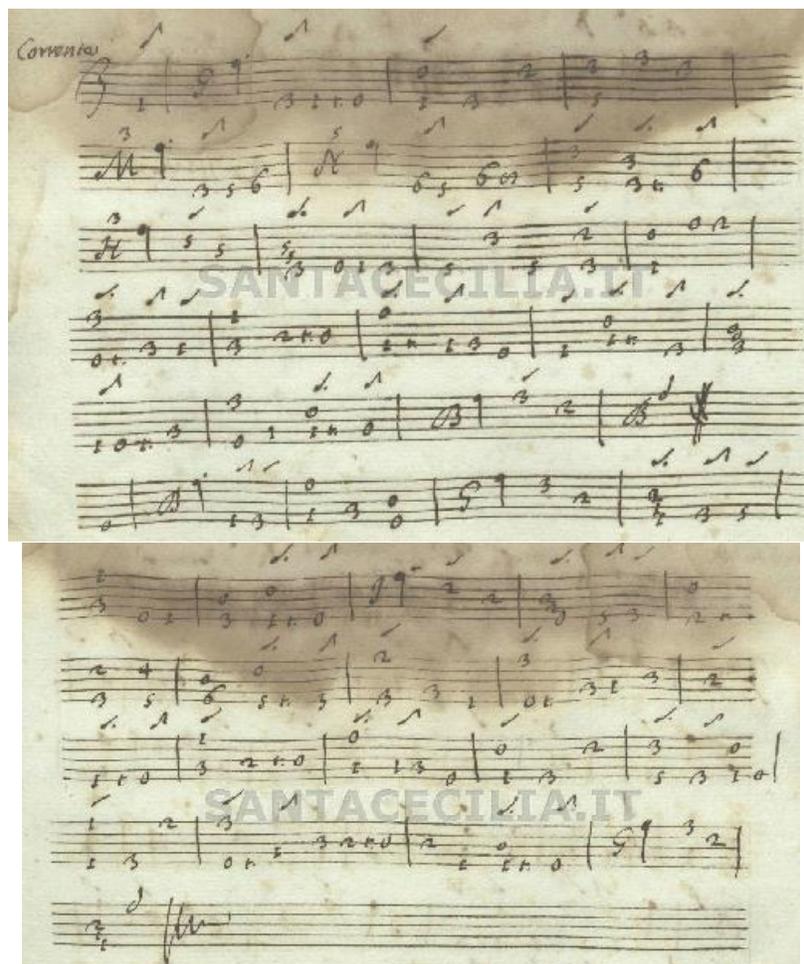
Sarabanda

p.88-89

Alemanda

The Corrente has been copied between the Alemanda and Sarabanda in F major taken from Corbetta's 'Varii scherzi' (1648). The printed book lacks the Corrente which makes up the standard movements of a suite. It is conceivable the Corrente in I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 formed part of this suite, perhaps omitted from the printed book for reasons of space.

**Corrente - I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.60 – 61**



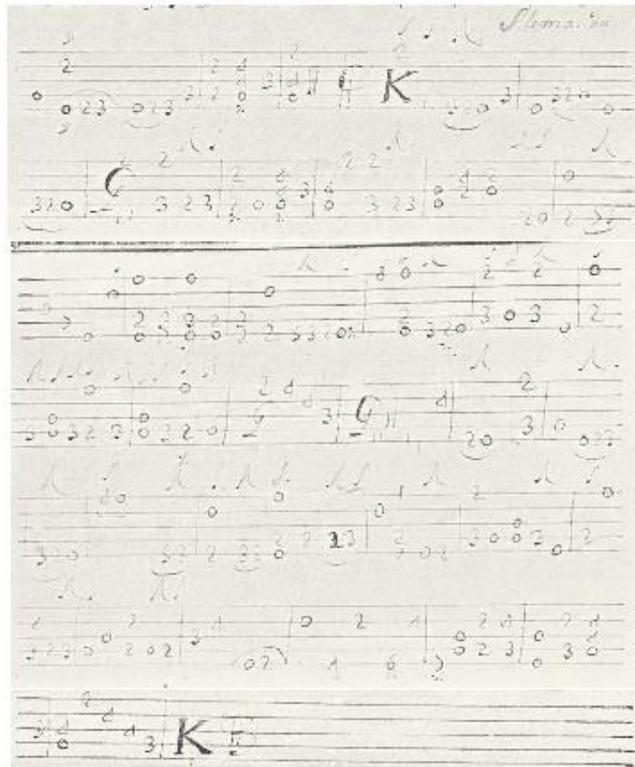


The Alemanda is also found in the Spanish manuscript 'Libro de diferentes cifras' - E-MnMús.811 p.21 – 23. This includes a number of pieces which may be attributed to Corbetta for one reason or another.<sup>12</sup> Given that his music circulated more widely than that of any other baroque guitarist and that the two versions of the Alemanda are similar allows one to speculate that it is by him together with the Sarabanda in the same key. The two versions are very similar although the note values in 'Libro de diferentes cifras' have been doubled – there are twenty-eight bars instead of fourteen – and there are some minor differences in the rhythm in the second half. B minor is a key which Corbetta favoured – the opening suite in 'La guitarre royale' (1671) is in that key. It is possible that all three pieces were included in the missing book printed between 1643 and 1648.

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<sup>12</sup> See Section VI Part 5/Part 2 for discussion of this manuscript.

Alemanda - I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.88-89/E-MnMús.811 p.21-23



Sarabanda - I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 p.86

The image displays a musical score for five staves, all in treble clef, 3/4 time, and the key of D major (indicated by two sharps). Each staff begins with a common time signature of 8. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, as well as rests and chords. The score is organized into measures, with some measures containing multiple notes or chords. The overall structure suggests a short piece or a section of a larger work.

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## I-Rama-A-Ms.4912 (*Olim* I-Rsc Ms.AS A 4912)

### Contents

The following is a list of the contents of the manuscript showing the disposition of the pieces by Corbetta and Bartolotti. The folio numbers have been pencilled in to the manuscript recently and include the blank pages; they are not present in the original pdf. As the pages have been re-arranged more than once it is conceivable that some of the blank pages at the end belong at the beginning. The page number in the available pdf is shown for each piece is shown first followed by the current folio number and page number in the complete pdf.

#### [1° E D minor] 11 pages with erased content f.1r-6r/p/1-11

	f.1r/p.1	[Preludio?]	A	
	f.1v/p.2	[Alamanda?]	A	
	f.2r/p.3	Illegible	?	
	f.2v/p.4	Illegible	A?	
	f.3r/p.5	Illegible	A?	
	f.3v/p.6	Illegible	A?	
	f.4r/p.7	Illegible	B	
	f.4v/p.8	Partly legible	B	
	f.5r/p.9	Partly legible	B	
	f.5v/p.10	Partly legible	B	
	f.6r/p.11	Partly legible	B	Conclusion of previous piece

#### [2° O] G minor (13 pieces)

	p.2-3	f.6v-7r/p.12-13	Alamanda	A	Corbetta 1643 p. 47
	p.4	f.7v/p.14	Sarabanda	A	Corbetta 1643 p. 49
	p.5	f.8r/p.15	Alemanda d'Rainer	B	
	p.6	f.8v/p.16	Sarabanda	B	
	p.7-9	f.9r-10r/p.17-19	Capriccio	B	
	p.10	f.10v/p.20	Untitled	B	Time signature C
	p.11	f.11r/p.21	Presto	B	Last bar Grave assai
	p.11	f.11r/p.21	Allegro	B	
	p.12	f.11v/p.22	Untitled	B	Time signature 12/8
	p.12	f.11v/p.22	Untitled	B	Time signature 3
	p.13	f.12r/p.23	Gauotta	B	
	p.14-15	f.12v-13r/p.24-5	Giga del Rainer	B	
	p.15	f.13r/p.24-5	Minuet	B	

#### [3° D]<sup>1</sup> A minor/A major (7 Pieces)

	p.16-17	f.13v-14r/p.26-7	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.54
	p.18-19	f.14v-15r/p.28-9	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti?

#### 4 pages with erased content f.15v-f.17r/p.30-33

	f.15v-16r/p.30-1	Illegible	A	
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<sup>1</sup> *Alfabeto* letter is on f.14v/p.28.

	f.16v-17r/p.32-3	Corrente	A	Partly legible
	f.17r/p.33	Allegro d'[Rainer??]	B	Partly legible
p.20-23	f.17v-19r/p.34-7	Toccata	A	Bartolotti? In A major
p.24-25	f.19v--20r/p.38-9	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 55
p.26-27	f.20v-21r/p.40-1	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p.57
p.28-29	f.21v-22r/p.42-3	Untitled	B	Time signature C
p.29	f.22r/p.43	Corrente del Rainer	B	

**4 pages ruled but unused f.22v-f.24r/p.44-47 – folios in wrong order**

	f.23v/p.44	Unused		
	f.24r/p.45	Unused		Reverse of sticker 4° +
	f.22v/p.46	Unused		See through of f.22r
	f.23r/p.47	Unused		

**4° + E minor (6 pieces)**

p.30-31	f.24v-25r/p.48-9	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.1
p.32	f.25v/p.50	Gauotta	A	Bartolotti p.2
p.33	f.26r/p.51	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p.3
p.34-35	f.26v-27r/p.52-3	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p.2
p.36-37	f.27v-28r/p.54-5	Corrente	A	Bartolotti p.3
p.38-39	f.28v-29r/p.56-7	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p.7

**10 pages ruled but unused f.29v-34r/p.58-65 - f.31v-32r missing from pdf**

	f.29v/p.58	Unused		See through of f.29r?
	f.34r/p.65	Unused		Reverse of sticker 5° B

**5° B C major/minor (16 pieces)**

p.40-42	f.34v-35v/p.66-8	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.26
p.43	f.36r/p.69	Minuette	A	Bartolotti p.37
p.44	f.36v/70	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p.33
p.45	f.37r/p.71	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p.35
p.46-47	f.37v-38r/p.72-3	Capriccio	A	Bartolotti p.33
p.48-49	f.38v-39r/p.74-5	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p.34
p.50-51	f.39v-40r/p.76-7	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p.38
p.52-53	f.40v-41r/p.78-9	Alemanda del Rainer	B	In C minor
p.53	f.41r/p.79	Corrente dell Istesso	B	In C minor
	f.41v	4 Minuet del Rainer		
p.54	f.41v/p.80	P°. Minuet	B	
p.54	f.41v/p.80	2° Minuet	B	
p.55	f.42r/p.81	3° Minuet	B	
p.55	f.42r/p.81	4° Minuet	B	
p.56	f.42v/p.82	Minuet	B	
p.56	f.42v/p.82	Sarab[anda] in tempo de minuet	B	
p.57	f.43r/p.83	Untitled	B	Time signature €

**2 pages ruled but unused f.43v-f.44r/p.84-85**

	f.43v/p.84	Unused		See through of f.43r
	f.44r/p.85	Unused		See through of f.44v

**6° G F major (5 pieces)**

p.58-59	f.44v-45r/p.86-7	Alemanda	A	Corbetta 1648 p.48
p.60-61	f.45v-46r/p.88-9	Corrente	A	Corbetta ?
p.62-63	f.46v-47r/p.90-1	Sarabanda	A	Corbetta 1648 p. 50
p.64	f.47v/p.92	Preludio	A	Corbetta 1671 p.22

**1 page ruled but unused f.48r/p.93**

p.65-66	f.48v-49r/p.94-5	Alemanda	A	Corbetta 1671 p.22
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**10 pages ruled but unused f.49v-f.54r/p.96-105****7° C D major (6 pieces)**

p.67-70	f.54v-56r/p.106-9	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p.42
p.71-73	f.56v-57v/p.110-12	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 49
p.73-75	f.57v-58v/p.112-14	Corrente	A	Bartolotti p. 46
p.75-76	f.58v-59r/p.114-15	Untitled	B	Time signature 12/8
p.76	f.59r/p.115	Untitled	B	Time signature 3
p.76	f.59v/p.116	Untitled - partly legible	B	Time signature 3

**9 pages ruled but unused f. 60r-64r/p.117-123. f.63v-f64r missing from pdf****8° A G major (5 pieces)**

p.77-79	f.64v-65v/p.124-6	Preludio	A	Bartolotti p. 10
p.80	f.66r/p.127	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti p. 13
p.81-82	f.66v-67r/p.128-9	Alemanda	A	Bartolotti p. 15
p.83	f.67v/p.130	Sarabanda	A	Bartolotti GB-Ob Ms.Mus.Sch. C94 f.9r

**1 page ruled but unused f.68r/p.131**

p.84-85	f.68v-69r/p.132-3	Gigue	A	Bartolotti p. 15
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**Tuono Trasportata B minor (6 pieces)**

p.86	f.69v/p.134	Sarabanda tuono trasportato	A	Corbetta?
p.87	f.70r/p.135	Preludio Arp.?	B	
p.88-89	f.70v-71r/p.136-7	Alemanda	A	Corbetta? E-MnMús.811 p.21
p.89	f.71r/p.137	Del Rainer Sarab[and] <sup>a</sup>	B	
p.90	f.71v/p.138	Alemanda del Rainer	B	Crossed out
p.90-91	f.71v-72r/p.138-9	Giga del Rainer	B	

**D minor (1 piece)**

p.92-98	f.72v-75v/p.140-6	Passagalli	A	Bartolotti p. 78
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**1 page ruled but unused f.76r/p.147**

**A minor (1 piece)**

p.99-105 f.76v-79v/p.148-54 Passagalli A Bartolotti p. 62

**D minor (1 piece)**

p.106-107 f.80r-80v/p.155-6 Fuga Q e del Preludio che sta nel principio d' q<sup>s</sup> libro<sup>2</sup> B

**G minor (1 piece)**

p.108-110 f.81r-82r/p.157-9 Passagalli B

**10 pages ruled but unused f.82v-87r/p.160-9**

**B flat major (2 pieces)**

p.111-112 f.87v-88r/p.170-1 Preludio B  
f.88v/p.172 Illegible B

**17 pages ruled but unused f. 89r-97r/p.173-85, f.94v-96r missing from pdf**

**Scordatura 1 (1 pieces)<sup>3</sup>**

p.113-114 f.97v-98r/p.186-7 Allemanda, che si chiamo il Pentim.<sup>to</sup> d Dom.<sup>co</sup> Rainer, da si feci B

**8 pages ruled but unused f.98v-102r/p.188-195**

**Scordatura 2 (4 pieces)<sup>4</sup>**

p.115-116 f.102v-103r/p.196-7 Alemanda etc<sup>5</sup> B  
p.116-117 f.103r-103v/p.197-8 Alemanda del Rainer B  
p.118-119 f.104r-104v/ Altr Alemanda del istesso Rainer B  
p.199-200  
p.120 f.105r/p.201 Giga del istesso Rainer B

**The remaining folios are unused or include illegible content f.106r-f.119v/p.202-230**

f.105v/p.202	See through of f.105r		
f.111r/p.213	Minuet	B	Partly legible
f.115r/p.221	Some sort of table?		Badly damaged
f.115v/p.222	Table of chords		

<sup>2</sup> This implies that there is a prelude to this fugue – presumably in A minor – in the missing first section of the manuscript.

<sup>3</sup> Intervals from 5th course upwards = minor 3rd – major 3rd - perfect 4th – minor 3rd. The manuscript does not give any indication of pitch, or indeed the method of stringing.

<sup>4</sup> Intervals from 5th course upwards = major 3rd – perfect 4th - perfect 4th – perfect 4th.

<sup>5</sup> A note reads “L’Alfabeto stà in fine d’q[ues]<sup>to</sup> libro” followed by Chord + in tablature according to the new tuning. This probably refers to the contents of f.115r-v.

F. 116r-119v/p.223-30 may originally have been at the beginning of the manuscript. Content is illegible but appears to be in Hand A.

**Revised July 2019**